

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 IO-13 SAJ-01 ACDA-10

OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 /091 W

-----041710Z 068923 /41

R 041559Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1179

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0062

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIA MEDIA SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 4

1. SUMMARY: PRESS LED WITH STORIES ON LEBANON AND EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN CONTACTS. AL-BAATH HEADLINED: "RESOLUTION ON COLLECTION HEAVY ARMS TO BE IMPLEMENTED WITHIN SEVERAL DAYS" AND CALL BY LEBANESE PRIMIN HUSS THAT LEBANON IS COLLECTIVE ARAB PROBLEM. TISHRIIN BANNERED: "CONTACTS BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT TO CONFRONT THE COMING STAGE." PRESS REPORTED KHALID FAHUM ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PALESTINIAN CENTRAL COUNCIL WILL MEET IN DAMASCUS AND CALL BY KHALID AL-HASAN FOR JOINT ARAB COMMAND INCLUDING PLO. EDITORIALS STRONGLY ATTACKED INAUGURATION OIL
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PIPELINE FOR TRANSIT IRAQI CRUDE ACROSS TRUKEY AND CALLED ON U.S., TO USE ITS INFLUENCE FOR JUST PEACE OR FACE ALL-OUT CONFRONTATION WITH ARABS. END SUMMARY.

2. LEBANON: SYRIAN MEDIA GAVE PROMINENCE TO LEBANESE EVENTS. UNNAMED SOURCES QUOTED AS PREDICTING FIRST WEEK OF NEW YEAR WILL WITNESS PROGRESS ON NUMBER OF ISSUES

INCLUDING POLITICAL, SECURITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. SAME "SOURCES" STATED HEAVY WEAPONS COLLECTION WILL BE IMPLEMENTED THIS WEEK. ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED HUSS CALL FOR SOUTH LEBANON TO BE CONSIDERED COLLECTIVE ARAB PROBLEM SINCE LEBANON INCAPABLE DEALING WITH IT ALONE. SOUTH LEBANON CALLED SOCIAL AND SECURITY PROBLEM, SOLUTION OF WHICH SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION WITH ALL ARAB HEADS OF STATE. SYRIAN MEDIA ALSO ANNOUNCED IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESS CENSORSHIP DECREES AND STATED CLOSED NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES WILL NOW BE PERMITTED TO REOPEN (NEVER MENTIONING WHO CLOSED THEM). PUBLICATIONS LISTED AS REOPENING INCLUDE AL-NAHAR, AL-SAFIR, AL-MUHARRIR, BEIRUT, L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, AND WEEKLY AL-BUSTUR. ARTICLE ALSO LISTED CONSTRAINTS UNDER WHICH LEBANESE PRESS WILL OPERATE AND CITED AL-ANWAR ARTICLE AS SAYING PERIOD OF CENSORSHIP IS FOR SIX MONTHS UNLESS RENEWED.

3. PLO MATTERS: PNC AND PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN KHALID FAHUM QUOTED BY SANA THAT CENTRAL COUNCIL WILL MEET JANUARY 11 IN DAMASCUS TO DISCUSS CONDITIONS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, NEW DEVELOPMENTS ACTING ON PALESTINIAN CAUSE, AND CREATION OF PALESTINIAN UNITY. FAHUM SAID MEETING WILL CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS OF PREPARATORY COMMITTEE RE EXPANSION PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL. SANA COMMENTED IT UNDERSTANDS NUMBER TO BE RAISED FROM PRESENT 185 TO BETWEEN 300 AND 350. KHALID AL-HASAN STATEMENTS IN KUWAIT CARRIED ON FRONT PAGE. HASAN QUOTED AS SAYING MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE CONFRONTING PLO IS ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT POLITICAL COMMAND AMONG UNCLASSIFIED

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SYRIA, EGYPT, JORDAN, AND PLO IN ACCORD WITH 1974 RABAT SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS ON NEED FOR SUCH COORDINATION. HOWEVER, HASAN ALSO NOTED THAT PALESTINIAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES MUST DECIDE ON FORMING CONFEDERATION WITH ANY STATE.

4. SYRO-EGYPTIAN UNITY: AL-THAWRA LED WITH STORY ON CURRENT CONTACTS BETWEEN SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS TO COORDINATE DELICATE "COMING PHASE" FOLLOWING RECENT ASAD-SADAT MEETINGS. TALKS REPORTEDLY AIMED AT PREPARING ARAB STAND AT GENEVA MEPC. ARTICLE REPORTED SUCH TALKS MAY LEAD TO MEETINGS OF COUNTRIES' FONMINS. NEWEST EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR UNITY AGREEMENTS COMES FROM SOCIALIST UNIONIST PARTY AND NASSERITE ARAB SOCIALIST UNION, BOTH OF WHICH BELONG TO SYRIA'S PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL FRONT. (THIS LEAVES COMMUNISTS AND ARAB SOCIALISTS STILL UNHEARD FROM AMONG PNF MEMBERS.)

5. IRAQI GOVERNMENT: CURSORY STATEMENT ANNOUNCED THAT "IRAQI FASCIST TRIBAL REGIME" YESTERDAY INAUGURATED

OIL PIPELINE FROM KIRKUK TO MEDITERRANEAN VIA TURKEY.
EDITORIAL PAINFULLY ASKED "WHY HAS IRAQI REGIME WITHHELD
FROM SYRIAN PEOPLE ANNUAL BENEFITS ESTIMATED AT APPROXI-
MATELY 600 MILLION POUNDS..." EDITORIAL ACCUSED BAGHDAD
OF ATTEMPTING EMBARRASS SYRIA AND WEAKEN HER POLITICALLY,
ECONOMICALLY AND MILITARILY. EDITORIAL POINTED OUT PIPE-
LINES ACROSS SYRIA HAVE DOUBLE THE CAPACITY OF NEW PIPE-
LINES AND FEIGNED AMAZEMENT AT IRAQI ACTIONS SINCE "STATES
ARE NEIGHBORS LINKED BY GOOD TIES" (PRESUMABLY HISTORICAL).
IRAQ ACCUSED OF FINANCING SABOTAGE AGAINST SYRIA AND
RUNNING ANTI-SYRIAN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN THROUGHOUT WORLD.
EDITORIAL EXPRESSED USUAL FAITH THAT IRAQI PEOPLE "WILL
NOT FORGIVE TIKRITIS."

6. U.S. ROLE IN AREA: ANOTHER EDITORIAL CALLED UPON
U.S. TO EITHER USE ITS INFLUENCE TO ACHIEVE JUST SOLUTION
OR TO PLUNGE INTO FULL CONFRONTATION WITH ARABS. STATUS
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QUO DECLARED INTOLERABLE AND ARTICLE WARNED CARTER ADMINI-
STRATION THAT THERE WAS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR DELAYING
ACTION.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770003-0400
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770183/aaaacuij.tel
Line Count: 143
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3669227
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIA MEDIA SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 4
TAGS: PFOR, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f8cee4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009